

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR, NATO, GR
SUBJECT: GREEK PARTICIPATION IN NATO EXERCISES

REF: ATHENS 3969 (NOTAL (DTG 280807Z APR 77)

1. THE POSSIBILITY THAT GREECE MIGHT BE DISPOSED TO PARTICIPATE AGAIN IN NATO EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN WAS RAISED BY AN AFTERNOON DAILY (LEFTIST, OPPOSITION ELEFTHEROTYPIA) ON MAY 6. ALL PAPERS CARRIED THIS AS A MAJOR STORY MAY 7 BASED ON A BACKGROUD BRIEFING BY A GOVERNMENT SOURCE.

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2. COMMENTING ON THE MAY6 PRESS REPORT, A GOVERNMENT SOURCE INDICATED THAT GREECE WAS DISPOSED TO PARTICIPATE IN LARGE-SCALE SEA AND AIR EXERCISES PLANNED BY NATO IN THE AEGEAN NEXT SEPTEMBER; BUT ONLY IF IT WAS DETERMINED THAT THIS WAS IN GREECE'S INTEREST AND PROVIDED CERTAIN GREEK CONDITIONS WERE MET. THE SOURCE ADDED THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN ON THE

MATTER, AS YET, WHICH, IN ANY CASE, FALLS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STATUS OF GREECE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO WHICH IS STILL UNDER NEGOTIATION.

3. THE ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT SOURCE'S COMMENTS IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL ATHENS NEWS AGENCY BULLETIN DID NOT SPELL OUT WHAT THE SOURCE SAID ABOUT GREEK CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS NATO EXERCISE. HOWEVER, PRESS REPORTS INDICATED THAT THE SOURCE HAD DESCRIBED THE CONDITIONS AS BEING OF A TECHNICAL NATURE. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS WENT FURTHER AND SPECULATED THAT THE PRINCIPAL CONDITION WAS THAT ANY NATO EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN BE UNDER THE COMMAND OF A GREEK ADMIRAL. (ONE NEWSPAPER COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS THE PRACTICE BEFORE GREECE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MILITARY WING OF NATO IN 1974.) THE REPORTS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT GREEK PARTICIPATION IN THESE EXERCISES WOULD NOT, IN ANY CASE, MEAN A GREEK RETURN TO THE MILITARY WING OF NATO UNTIL THE REASONS FOR THE GREEK WITHDRAWAL HAD BEEN ELIMINATED.

4. CONCURRENTLY WITH THE ABOVE REPORTS, THE PRESS HERE ON MAY 6 AND 7 REFERRED TO A RECENT PRAVDA ARTICLE WHICH EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBLE RETURN OF GREECE TO THE MILITARY WING OF NATO. PRAVDA REPORTEDLY BASED THIS ON THE FACT A NATO EXERCISE (I.E. DAWN PATROL) WAS TAKING PLACE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AT PRESENT AND THE GREEKS HAVE SCHEDULED SEA-AIR EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN ABOUT THE SAME TIME. THIS "COINCIDENCE," ACCORDING TO PRAVDA, WAS PROOF OF GREEK INVOLVEMENT IN NATO'S MILITARISTIC PREPARATIONS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH IS A "SOURCE OF CONCERN" TO THE SOVIETS. THE PRAVDA ARTICLE APPARENTLY GOES ON TO CLAIM THAT THE US IS APPLYING INCREASING PRESSURES ON GREECE TO RETURN TO MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN NATO.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE PRAVDA ARTICLE, A GOG SOURCE SAID THE GREEK GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED PRESSURE FROM NO ONE. IT SHOULD BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY EVERYONE, HE ADDED, ONCE AND FOR ALL, THAT "GREECE WILL YIELD TO ABSOLUTELY NO PRESSURE."
KUBISCH

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